

both sides. I had served with many of them in other capacities, so I felt very welcome.

I want to mention very quickly my staff, my prior staff, and my staff now. They know once you have served with Ms. CONWAY, you are a staffer for life.

I also want to thank the staff of this building. Even coming here today I got a little turned around. I know where I am going politically; I am just not sure of the building. So all the staff has been very gracious. I think they actually all know me by first name: the effervescent Ms. CONWAY.

When I was sworn in, I promised the good people of California's Central Valley that they would be the only special interest I represent. I hope they believe that I kept my word.

Congress is not a particularly popular institution right now, and a good dose of the criticism is well-deserved. Serving in Congress doesn't make you a hero and should not break any privilege except the privilege of serving this country. Instead of citizen-legislators, we have many professional politicians today, and perhaps some Americans would prefer that more Members served just 6 months, like I am, rather than for decades.

Nevertheless, I have always had a healthy respect for anyone who puts themselves out there and runs for public office. We need public servants to develop good ideas for solving problems, to present these ideas to their communities, and to advance those solutions in Congress.

In short, this country—the leader of the free world—is worth the conversations, the efforts, and the fights that happen here and on the campaign trail, notwithstanding all the messy unpleasantness that goes with the process.

As Americans it is easy for us to forget how rare and precious self-government has been throughout the world. Each and every day that I have stepped into this historic Capitol, I have stood in wonder and awe of how truly amazing this place is and how truly amazing the opportunity is to serve this country.

In Washington I have found that despite all the current bitterness in Congress—I am getting a little emotional—there were a range of issues, including the California water crisis, in which there is a good chance for bipartisan cooperation.

Moving forward, I urge my colleagues to explore every possibility to work together on water, wildfires, energy, and other pressing issues, knowing that families are counting on us to solve the big problems that impact them daily.

As my service nears its end, I would like to thank my family. They did not take the oath of office, but they have certainly shared with me in this. My heartfelt appreciation—and I use the word heart—goes to my husband, Craig, who actually, 8½ weeks ago, had a heart transplant and is doing well thanks to God; my sons, Anthony and Tim; and my dear grandchildren, Caine

and Autrey. I also can't forget our dog, Jake, who doesn't miss me, but I do miss him a lot when I am here.

Finally, I would like to say a few words about my constituents back home. The Valley's agricultural communities work hard to feed the Nation. Most people buying their produce, meat, and milk at stores throughout the country have no idea where that food comes from or all the effort it took to get it to them.

Maintaining the well-being of these communities is a national security issue. Unfortunately, many Americans will only realize that in the most dramatic way if conditions in these communities become so difficult that people simply decide they can't continue working and growing any longer.

In California, especially lately, Silicon Valley gets all the headlines. While I am sure the tech executives deep down inside are nice people and they are smart people, they don't feed a lot of the families.

The Central Valley of California is the main pillar of our Nation's food chain. Its residents are my heroes. They are people who get up every day, go to work, pay their taxes, worship at their place of choice, and donate to charity when they can. I think all they really want to accomplish is to live their best life and maybe go to their kids' or their grandkids' soccer games on the weekend. Most people don't live and breathe politics like we do, but their work ultimately funds everything we do in Washington, and we can never forget them and that we are here with the single purpose of serving them.

So I would like to sign off by expressing my love and pride in the people of California's Central Valley who sent me here in the first place and to whom I shall return.

FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. LURIA) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LURIA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as we approach the conclusion of the 117th Congress and as I near the end of my service in this esteemed body.

As I reflect on the multitude of challenges this Nation and the world has faced over these 4 short years and those that lie ahead, I thank my colleagues and our leadership for the seriousness and dedication with which they have tackled these challenging issues.

I thank my staff in Washington who are here and those in our three district offices for their tireless dedication to the people of Virginia's Second District. They have assisted so many who needed a helping hand—everyone from farmers to shipbuilders across coastal Virginia.

I thank my family: my husband, Robert, and my daughter, Violet. I couldn't have been here and served the district and the people of Virginia without them.

I also want to acknowledge the strength and the bond of the class of 2018. They have been amazing colleagues and true friends, and I know that they will continue to be leaders and focus on improving our country for the next generation.

We entered Congress under a partial government shutdown which was a legacy of a protracted battle of how to fund security at our southern border—a 35-day lapse in government funding. It was the longest in our history. On my first weekend in office I visited a pop-up food bank for members of our Coast Guard where the local community rallied around our Coast Guard families who were starting the new year without a paycheck. This was a story of our community stepping in to care for one another, which is so common, and something that I heard repeatedly across these 4 years in every corner of our district.

But there are also stories of how the distraction caused by political theater and political division can lead to unnecessary hardship. As we approach a looming deadline this year to fund our government, we should not let these divisions or rhetoric stand in the way of performing our fundamental role as Congress.

On May 31, 2019—a day that remains etched in the memory of Virginia Beach—I saw the devastation caused by the first of two mass shootings that roiled our community. That day, 12 innocent victims left home for work before the Memorial Day weekend—a time they looked forward to spending with their families at barbecues and the beaches—yet instead their lives were senselessly stolen by a shooter who entered the municipal center and indiscriminately opened fire.

Again, just weeks ago on the eve of Thanksgiving, a shooter opened fire in a local Chesapeake Walmart where shoppers were grabbing their last-minute items for a holiday meal. This time our community lost six more precious lives who would not join their families at the holiday table. Among these losses was a 16-year-old boy. This Congress has taken small measures to prevent these types of tragic events in our community and yours, Mr. Speaker, but as I depart, I implore my colleagues to continue to do more.

The first time I stood in this very place to speak on the floor of the House, I rose as a Jewish woman to speak out against anti-Semitism which has seen a rapid and alarming rise and has even reared its head among our colleagues in this body in the form of claims of dual loyalty towards those who show support for Israel—our strongest ally in the Middle East. I look back on that first speech I made as a Member of Congress and am even more concerned today about the rising frequency and pervasiveness of anti-Semitism. I implore my colleagues to continue their quest to root out this scourge of vile and pernicious anti-Semitism.

In that first speech, I mentioned my oath to support and defend the Constitution. But little did I know that 2 short years later, I would witness an attempt by our own President and his allies to subvert the Constitution and summon a mob to disrupt the counting of electoral votes of a free and fair election.

On that day, January 6, 2021, lives were lost, these hallowed Halls were desecrated, and the strength of our democracy was tested. I have been humbled to participate in uncovering facts about that dark day in our Nation's history. I thank Chairman THOMPSON, Vice-Chair CHENEY, my colleagues, and the staff of the January 6 Committee for standing on the side of democracy.

I am proud of the work we have done over the last two Congresses to support our veterans and their families. My Gold Star families tax relief legislation eased the burden on children of those killed in combat or deceased from service-connected disabilities. I thank President Biden for making veterans' toxic exposure a priority. We passed the largest increase in access to veterans' benefits in our lifetime through the PACT Act, which included my COVENANT Act to provide healthcare to burn pit veterans.

The threats we face as a nation continue to grow as we witness Russia's unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine, Iran's persistent pursuit of a nuclear weapon, and the rise of China threatening our maritime and national security. As we have heard in testimony, China is likely to attempt to take Taiwan by force in the next 5 years. This is our most pressing national security concern.

The action or inaction that we take in standing up to China in this moment will determine whose values will rule the remainder of the 21st century—the United States' and our allies' or the Chinese Communist Party.

That is why as I depart I urge my colleagues to take this threat seriously and to fulfill the constitutional task of Article I, Section 8, to provide and maintain a Navy. If we fail to remain the predominant maritime power in the Pacific, frankly, nothing else that we do here in this Congress will matter if we don't get this right.

God bless you.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS ON CAMPUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, freedom of speech and thought on college campuses is essential to one of the most

important missions of the university: the search for truth.

While censorship can come from the right or left, many colleges and universities are now zealously devoted to advancing leftwing ideas and are willing to disregard evidence and logic to do it.

Universities should be a marketplace of ideas, not temples to a single political dogma. When students or faculty speak out against established norms, they are canceled, fired, or otherwise stigmatized by peers and university administrators.

This is not what our Founding Fathers intended for our country or for our universities. Thomas Jefferson, who founded the University of Virginia, once wrote: "I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man."

Universities used to promote this sentiment, but things have changed—and not for the better. Universities should be centers of education, not indoctrination. Yet university leaders either brazenly push their own agenda or walk on eggshells in fear of their own student body.

Research and development suffer when debate and discussion are openly rejected on college campuses. Quashing intellectual curiosity hinders every field of study.

The freedom to speak and think freely comes from God. Students should not have to sign away their First Amendment rights after enrolling in college, especially if those institutions accept taxpayer funds. It is time for colleges and universities to be held accountable when they refuse to protect the free speech of students and faculty.

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Members of the Education and Workforce Committee have submitted multiple bills to promote and protect the freedom of speech on college campuses.

In the next Congress, we look forward to examining closely these bills and other ways to preserve the First Amendment on campuses.

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

Ms. FOXX. This administration won't be happy until it controls how, when, and where you work. It is hard to know if it is sheer arrogance that drives this administration to think it knows better than you or if Biden is so beholden to Big Labor that he refuses to see what is best for the rest of America.

Regardless, this administration's attack on independent contractors is wrong, and Republicans aren't standing for it.

Many workers, especially women, have come to rely on the flexibility the independent contracting model provides. A regular 9-to-5 schedule does not work for every American.

Forcing all workers into a one-size-fits-all model, while a dream for union bosses, is a mistake. This debate is about freedom. Workers deserve the freedom to choose how they work.

I am pushing back against Democrats' assault on entrepreneurial opportunity and their attempts to control the lives of Americans from birth until death.

Because I have seen firsthand that when the Federal Government steps aside and allows job creators and industry leaders to innovate, the workforce and U.S. economy will thrive.

We have had enough of this Washington-knows-best mentality.

Remember when President Obama told Americans, "You didn't build that." He ridiculously claimed that businesses need the government's help to be successful.

As if this wasn't bad enough, now the Biden administration is telling America's entrepreneurs, "You can't build that." This is unacceptable. We must do everything we can to stop this proposed rule, and I encourage everyone to get involved.

Get on the phone, call your Representative and Senator, and submit a comment. We must put pressure on the Biden administration to withdraw this proposed rule.

Enough is enough. The livelihoods of real people are at risk. Americans should be able to build a future they want for themselves. It is time for Washington to get out of the way.

RECOGNIZING REPRESENTATIVES G. K. BUTTERFIELD AND DAVID PRICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. ADAMS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor two outstanding North Carolinians and my colleagues retiring from the U.S. House of Representatives, the Honorable G. K. BUTTERFIELD for 18 years of service and the Honorable DAVID PRICE for 34 years. These gentlemen have given a total of 52 years of service to our State and Nation for which we are indeed grateful.

True statesmen, Representatives BUTTERFIELD and PRICE have been invaluable Members of Congress and they have served with incredible distinction. They are well-respected, admired, loved by colleagues here in Congress, and revered by citizens back home. They each have made their life's work all about service.

Having known each of them for a very long time, I have appreciated the opportunity to learn from them and to work with each of them in North Carolina and here in Congress. Service has been their legacy as it is the rent we pay for living on this Earth.

Together, these incredible Members have kept their rent fully paid up throughout their careers and in North Carolina and in this Congress.

Both scholars and men of enormous intellect, PRICE and BUTTERFIELD have been leaders in their communities, and they have used their expertise on and off Capitol Hill to interrupt injustice and ignorance.